

PARTICIPACION Y GESTION PUBLICA

A preface by Claudio Acioly Jr.¹

ARTICLES REVIEWED

1. *En búsqueda del orden territorial (Alvarez-Siembieda, sept 97)*
2. *Educación a nivel de las bases para las comunidades latinoamericanas (Pereira, Jan98)*
3. *Presupuesto participativo y políticas de poderes en Porto Alegre (Goldsmith, Vainer, Jan01)*
4. *Construir consenso civil en El Salvador (Lungo, Mortarini, Rojas, Jan98)*
5. *Planificación y preservación participativas en La Habana (LeRoyser, Coyula, July97)*
6. *Gestión de recursos del suelo en América Latina (Barkin, May95)*
7. *Reconcebir la ciudad: una nueva perspectiva de las políticas sobre los asentamientos humanos en América Latina (Barkin, Jan94)*

This section provides us with an overview of initiatives focusing on citizen participation and public management showing a wealth of viewpoints about the importance of citizen participation and its close association with the access to land by low-income families in Latin American cities.

The articles give us evidences that the urban poor and popular sectors of Latin American societies hardly have any influence on decision making process and in the design and implementation of land policies that could otherwise benefit them and facilitate the access to decent housing and better living conditions.

The articles make a point that citizen participation is important for the design of pro-poor public policies. However there will be little change in the way Latin American cities are urbanizing if low-income residents are not capable to articulate their needs and demand in a coordinated and organised manner and getting involved in the formulation of these policies. Thus their capacity to influence land policies for example remain limited. If no changes occur in that direction we will continue to witness a perverse settlement pattern and processes of social and spatial segregation that pushes significant parts of the urban population onto peripheral land development schemes.

The articles show us that there is hope. Some cities and organisations are making great efforts to change this equation by promoting capacity building, policy dialogues and knowledge dissemination to instrument and inform the poor, preparing them to articulate their needs and demands.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is playing a very important role in facilitating this dialogue, promoting good examples of policies, disseminating

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knowledge and connecting people and organisations from the various countries of the region and at times even from other regions of the planet. This helps to demonstrate – as these articles published by Land Lines – that regional dialogues on urban policies and experiences make sense and policy changes and qualitative steps towards more equity in access to land can be accomplished.

The article of Alvarez and Siembieda's focuses on the spatial planning and the need to increase knowledge about the impacts of globalisation and urbanization on cities, their function and spatial structures. The article makes an interesting introduction acknowledging a common process that is perceived in Latin America regarding the retreat of the State, the restructuring of its scope and size and the fundamental shift from a traditional role of provider to that of enabler, facilitator of development processes. The article reports on the 3 major propositions emanated from a seminar that took place in Mexico in 1977: the need to set up monitoring systems through urban information systems, the design of public policies that can counterbalance the uncontrolled urbanisation and the recognition of the roles that NGO's and CBO's should play.

The latter is an important issue to consider when one is looking at land policies and access to a serviced plot in Latin American cities. A close look at the region's major cities shows that governments are still suspicious and unilateral when it comes to urban policy making and implementation, holding on traditional and often top-down planning approaches. Stakeholders' participation and truly participatory planning where CBO's and NGO's play a role are still the exception. The articles by Pereira and Lungo give us strong evidences that there is a significant progress in the cities where the involvement of CBO's and NGO's is taking place.

Pereira reports on efforts geared to capacity building of popular sectors in Quito, Ecuador, where a Forum gathered ministers, mayors, CBO's and various stakeholders to discuss and coin land policies that actually addresses the needs of the urban poor. Pereira shows that insecurity of land tenure leads to violent conflicts and touches one of the fundamentals of human rights. She reports that the pilot programme involving 50 different communities reveals that the lack of information and knowledge about the issues of land policies and problems of equity in the access to land property amongst popular sectors of society impede them to participate and contribute in the design of public policies that address their demands.

Lungo reports on the important role played by NGO's in the policy formulation and planning San Salvador's metropolitan region that resulted into innovations and the design of urban governance instruments. His article acknowledges the positive aspects of the process of decentralisation and increasing citizen participation that Latin America experiences and that is helping to bring about other forms of social control of the State. He reports the role played by a local NGO Prisma in innovations and different power relations at the local level and how the workshop organised with LILP in October 1997 helped to strengthen consensus building and mobilise the involvement of government, CBO's, local

and international NGO's. Lungo reports that thanks to international cooperation other planning and land management instruments such as plusvalias, PPP, etc. are being considered in an integrated development plan for Greater San Salvador.

But when one considers progress in urban governance, Latin America gives a great lesson to the world by introducing and disseminating a model of participatory urban governance where citizens play a central role. It started in Porto Alegre and Santo André in the end of the eighties when progressive local government administrations governed by Brazil's labour party – PT – introduced what is called "Participatory Budgeting-PB". The 2000 municipal election brought to government a number of progressive mayors resulting in actually more than 100 local governments practicing participatory budgeting as their major vehicle for promoting citizen participation in their cities. It is worth mentioning that the success of the experience resulted into other less progressive political parties introducing the model in other cities of Brazil. Spin-off effects can also be noticed in neighbouring countries like Peru where civil society mobilisation influenced the enactment of legislation on PB – inspired by the Brazilian experience – and cities like Villa El Salvador have become national reference for PB.

Goldsmith and Vainer, provides us with an elaborated article about the PB in Porto Alegre, Brazil's most southern state capital. The city has been practicing PB uninterruptedly since 1989. The article provides us with an in-depth analysis about the meaning of PB as an instrument offering a different option of governance through which citizens actually decide on the allocation of public resources on their cities. The article gives evidences about the remarkable increase in number of citizens involved in the PB of Porto Alegre since its early beginning. The article gives additional illustrations about how citizen participation is being fundamental on strategic decisions regarding the large construction investment such as supermarket and car industry that puts the local government in a good position to negotiate with private sector investors.

The article of LeRoyer and Coyula depicts an interesting interview with one of Cuba's most prominent urban planner and architect whose work in Havana has been acknowledged internationally. The article focuses on Cuba's capital and provides the reader with an accurate view on Coyula's views on its development. While describing the importance of the Group for Integrated Development of the Capital, he underscores the dilemmas to deal with the needed public investment that the group had to deal with during the special period when Cuba faced tremendous hardship caused by the disappearance of the trade agreements with the Soviet Union. Planning and managing development with scarcity of basic inputs such as energy and building materials reinforce central planning in resource allocation. He points out for the need to increase citizen participation in planning. What many do not know is that citizen participation is common in Cuba, more than one would acknowledge from the outside. The article points out the importance of the Integrated Neighbourhood Transformation Bureaus as a strong area-based planning tool where residents are on the driving seat. He argues about the

need to reverse the tradition of central planning – reinforced during the special period – which will ease planning and governance of the cities. The article gives his view about the unique 100 m² model of the city that is not only used for the analysis and visualization of the impacts of planning decisions but also to inform and nurture an urban culture to citizens, group of pupils from primary and secondary schools who regularly visit the model. Nowadays many cities in Europe are using this instrument e.g. Berlin, Barcelona, Rotterdam just to mention a few.

In the articles of Barkin, the focus is on land management and its impacts on human settlements in the Latin American context. The first article argues from the start that local governments need to articulate alternative responses to cope with the adverse effects of urbanisation and globalisation. He describes how the LILP is responding to this through the establishment of networks, capacity building and research. He points out the work closely done with 3 major regional networks: SIAP, UMP and Red Ciudad 2025.

Barkin describes some of the training programmes carried out by the LILP in cooperation with these networks and local partners in Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia. Finally, the first article stresses the great importance of the research programme in unveiling the changes in urban form and human settlement patterns which is partly provoked by the economic integration of the region into global markets. Land markets, value capture and capacity building are helping practitioners and local governments to adjust and adopt an integrated and systematic approach to land policies.

The last article of this series and signed by Barkin reports on a conference organised in the headquarter of the LILP in Cambridge (1993) that gathered public officials and researchers of Latin America to discuss instruments of land policies and property tax in urban areas. The article makes an analysis of the impacts of the internationalisation of Latin America's economies on cities and human settlement formations. It provides the reader with some provocative suggestions about liberalisation, weak government systems and the need to design an alternative development programme that actually link urban governance with economic planning.

I am sure that the reader will enjoy this set of articles that make a link between land policies and the overall governance of cities. The authors make a point when arguing in favour of more citizen participation as one of the ways to influence more distributive policies affecting the use of land that will ultimately help to foster sustainable urban development.